

Philips' Health Index indicates Singapore's ambitions for digital transformation

06 May 2021 | Analysis

Philips' Future Health Index 2021 report reveals that Singapore's healthcare industry is prioritizing investment in artificial intelligence (AI) and home care delivery over the next three years



[Royal Philips](#), a global leader in health technology, on May 5, 2021, announced the publication of its Future Health Index (FHI) 2021 Singapore report: '*A Resilient Future: Healthcare leaders look beyond the crisis*'. Now in its sixth year, the Future Health Index 2021 report is based on proprietary research across 14 countries, including Singapore.

Representing the largest global survey of its kind to analyze the current and future priorities of healthcare leaders worldwide. With a focus on patient-centred healthcare enabled by smart technology, their vision is shaped by a fresh emphasis on partnerships, sustainability and new models of care delivery, both inside and outside the hospital.

An optimistic outlook

Although still grappling with the pandemic, 84% of Singapore's healthcare leaders are confident in their hospital or healthcare facility's ability to deliver quality care in the next three years – which is higher than the confidence levels of healthcare leaders in Australia (66%), China (58%) and the average of those in the 14 countries that Philips surveyed (75%).

The vast majority (93%) also feel that Singapore's healthcare system has shown resilience in how it has coped with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The past year has undoubtedly taken a significant toll on Singapore's healthcare system. Frontline healthcare workers have faced greater pressure than ever before, while senior leaders have been tasked with leading their institutions in the most trying of times," said Caroline Clarke, Market Leader and EVP, Philips ASEAN Pacific. "Yet the Future Health Index 2021 report highlights just how skillfully the country has risen to the challenge. It is encouraging to see Singapore emerging with such resilience and confidence for the future."

Bold ambitions for shifting care from hospital to home; AI is a major focus for the future

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated radical shifts in care delivery for both patients and providers around the world and the report reveals that, as Singapore's healthcare leaders consider what comes next, they are pragmatic about where and

how care is delivered.

Healthcare leaders anticipate that, three years from now, on average about a quarter (26%) of routine care delivery will take place outside the walls of Singapore's hospitals and healthcare facilities, up from around 20% today.

Singapore's healthcare leaders are also highly ambitious about shifting care delivery to home settings. While those surveyed said that just 19% of routine care being provided outside of the hospital is currently delivered in the home, they predict that 45% will be delivered at home three years from now – a bold target, which is far higher than any of the other countries that Philips surveyed (17% 14-country average) and the APAC[1] average (18%).

Singapore is leading the way in championing AI, too; nearly three in four of Singapore's healthcare leaders (71%) say that this is one of the digital health technologies that they are currently investing in – again far above the average healthcare leader across the 14 countries surveyed (36%) and in APAC (46%).

AI investment in Singapore is currently focused primarily on administrative tasks like automating documentation, scheduling appointments and improving workflow, above clinical and diagnostic applications. However, this looks set to change in the near future, as Singapore's healthcare leaders plan to invest in AI for clinical decision support (35%), to predict outcomes (33%) and to integrate diagnostics (28%).

Skills gaps must be addressed to achieve digital transformation

Despite these bold ambitions, staff inexperience and staff shortages could impede progress if not urgently addressed.

Philips' research found that staff's lack of experience with new technologies ranks among the top internal barriers to future planning in Singapore, with around half of Singapore's healthcare leaders (52%) citing it as a current impediment, whilst one in four (25%) say that staff shortages are also holding them back.

Lack of training is also cited as the biggest barrier to the wider adoption of digital health technologies by nearly half of Singapore's healthcare leaders (47%), followed closely by difficulties with data management (43%) likely relating to high volumes of data and a lack of clarity around ownership.

"The pandemic has confirmed the viability of remote care, and it is equally encouraging to see that Singapore is placing such a big focus on AI for the future. However, it is vital that the country's hospitals and healthcare facilities invest in adequate training and address staff shortages to move beyond purely administrative applications of these game-changing technologies and unlock their full potential," added Caroline Clarke.

Industry poised for unprecedented move on sustainability

Philips' Future Health Index 2021 report also finds that implementing environmental sustainability practices is set to become a dominant trend in Singapore, and globally, within the next three years.

While not a current concern for many, 49% of Singapore's healthcare leaders expect to prioritize the implementation of sustainability practices in their hospital or healthcare facility three years from now, up from just 2% today, and in line with the trend seen across healthcare leaders in the 14 countries surveyed (58% three years from now, up from 4% today globally).

Since 2016, Philips has conducted original research to help determine the readiness of countries to address global health challenges and build efficient and effective health systems.

[Future Health Index 2021 report](#)